



# National Park Service

## Western Arctic National Parklands



**Cape Krusenstern National Monument** is comprised of 659,807 acres of land and water, a coastal plain dotted with sizable lagoons and backed by gently rolling limestone hills. The area has been designated an Archeological district in the National Registry of Historic Places, and a National Historic Landmark. The core of the archeological district is made up of approximately 114 marine beach ridges. These ridges formed of gravel deposited by major storms and regular wind and wave action, record in horizontal succession the major cultural periods of the past 4,500 years. The prehistoric inhabitants of Northwest Alaska occupied the cape seasonally to hunt marine mammals, especially seals. As new beach ridges formed, camps were made on the new ridges closer to the water. Thus over the centuries, a chronological stratigraphy was laid down where the oldest cultural remains were found in the beach ridges farthest from the ocean.

**Kobuk Valley** contains approximately 1,726,500 acres. Trees approach their northern limit in the Kobuk Valley, where forest and tundra meet. Today's dry, cold climate still approximates that of late Pleistocene times, supporting a remnant flora once covering the vast Arctic steppe tundra bridging Alaska and Asia. Sand created by the grinding of glaciers has been carried to the Kobuk Valley by winds and water. The Great Kobuk Sand Dunes consist of 25 square miles of shifting sands, where summer temperatures can exceed 90 degrees F, and contains the largest active dune field in the arctic latitudes.

**Noatak National Preserve** lies in the western Brooks Range, and encompasses more than 250 miles of the Noatak River. Located above the Arctic Circle, the Noatak River flows from glacial melt atop Mount Igikpak (in the Brooks Range) out to Kotzebue Sound. Along its 425-mile course, the river has carved out the Grand Canyon of the Noatak. The river basin contains most types of arctic habitat. The preserve protects the largest untouched mountain-ringed river basin in the United States. It represents a yardstick of environmental health against which future conditions can be compared. The river basin provides an outstanding resource for scientific research, environmental education and subsistence and recreational opportunities. It has been designated by the United Nations as an International Biosphere Reserve.

**Bering Land Bridge National Preserve** is a remnant of the land bridge that connected Asia with North America more than 13,000 years ago. The land bridge itself is now overlain by the Chukchi Sea and the Bering Sea. During the glacial epoch this was part of a migration route for people, animals, and plants whenever ocean levels fell enough to expose the land bridge. Archeologists agree that it was across this Bering Land Bridge, also called Beringia, that humans first passed from Asia to populate the Americas.

**LOCATION:** Approximately 26 miles north of the Arctic Circle, Northwest Alaska. The park headquarters are located in Kotzebue, Alaska. There is no road access.

**CLIMATE, RECOMMENDED CLOTHING:** High winds throughout the year; short, mild, cool sunny summers; 24 hours of daylight for one month; long, severe, extremely cold winters; about one hour of daylight by December 1; 10-12" precipitation annually. For back country camping, wear warm clothing and hiking boots, dress in layers, & use rain gear.

**TRANSPORTATION:** To Kotzebue, fly with Alaska Airlines. To get to the parks from Kotzebue, fly with various air taxi operators, schedule flights to villages, or charter flights to specific park areas. Summer access may include motorized/non-motorized watercraft, aircraft, & by foot. Winter access may include snowmobiles, aircraft, & by foot. There is no transportation available within the parks.

**ACCESS TO LODGING AND SUPPLIES:** There are no NPS developments, services, campgrounds, or trails in the park areas. Food and supplies are not available within parklands. They are available in Kotzebue and nearby villages of Ambler, Kiana, and Noatak

**ADDRESS:** Western Arctic Parklands, P.O. Box 1029, Kotzebue, Alaska 99752

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